

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SENT TO D.C.
10/8/02

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Motor Row Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2200-, 2300- and 2400-blocks of South Michigan Avenue, including portions of the adjacent blocks of Wabash and Indiana Avenues, between Cermak & Stevenson Expressway
city or town Chicago vicinity _____
state Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60616

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Adams / SHP
Signature of certifying official

10-2-02
Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: Signature of Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

- ____ entered in the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.
- ____ determined eligible for the _____
 National Register
- ____ See continuation sheet.
- ____ determined not eligible for the _____
 National Register
- ____ removed from the National Register _____

____ other (explain): _____

NOTES

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>42</u>	<u>9</u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>42</u>	<u>9</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Specialty Store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Business

Commerce/Trade Specialty Store

Domestic Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style	Moderne
Spanish Revival	Sullivan-esque
Renaissance Revival	

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Concrete
roof	Asphalt
walls	Brick
	Glazed Terra Cotta
other	

Narrative Description

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Cook County, IL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance 1909-1936

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Refer to Continuation Sheets

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Commission on Chicago Landmarks

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Cook County, IL

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 28 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	<u>16</u>	<u>448101</u>	<u>4633615</u>	3	<u>16</u>	<u>448294</u>	<u>4633146</u>
2	<u>16</u>	<u>448315</u>	<u>4633606</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>448107</u>	<u>4633239</u>

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Linda Peters, Architectural Historian

organization Consultant date July 16, 2002

street & number 435 S. Cleveland Avenue telephone 847.506.0754

city or town Arlington Heights state IL zip code 60005

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Over 50 Multiple Owners

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Description

Motor Row is located on the city's Near South Side. The district consists of 59 properties, the majority of which are located on South Michigan Avenue, and secondarily on Wabash and Indiana avenues, between Cermak Road and the Stevenson Expressway. Cermak Road, or 22nd street, is the northern boundary. To the east, McCormick Place, the current location for Chicago's annual auto show, looms between it and the lake. The Stevenson Expressway is the southern boundary. To the west, vacant lots stretch between Wabash Avenue and the elevated rapid transit tracks of the Red Line.

Of the 59 total properties, there are 51 buildings and eight vacant lots in the Motor Row district. The majority of the buildings (42) contribute to its historic character. (See Appendix I: Motor Row Building Catalog for a listing of individual buildings.) In the context of the district, contributing buildings are those that were present during the district's period of significance (1909-36) and retain a substantial degree of historic building fabric, or, where character-defining features such as ground-floor display or upper-story windows have been altered, such alterations are largely reversible. The contributing buildings relate to the district's significance as an early motor row in Chicago and as significant examples of commercial showroom and other auto-related buildings, with historic associations therewith as well as representative architectural qualities.

Although the district's period of significance is 1909 to 1936, when the last of its auto-related buildings was constructed, most of the structures were built between 1909 and 1915, a period when the area first gained prominence as a location for automobile sales coinciding with the initial rise in popularity of the early automobile in Chicago. The buildings in the district include many representative examples of the early automobile showroom and related property types, as well as several commercial architectural styles from the period, including examples of the Chicago School and various other styles such as the Renaissance and Spanish Revival, Sullivanesque and Moderne styles. Significant architects designed many buildings.

Unlike the earlier historic mansions these buildings replaced, the buildings in Motor Row are constructed with no front- or side-yard setbacks, that is, to the edge of the sidewalk. The street facades, clad in brick or terra cotta with ornamental details, featured large display windows. Many of the names or the initials of the auto manufacturers are still visible on these facades. Historically, this allowed shoppers to easily view the automobiles that were on display in the showroom windows, whether they were on foot or driving by in a streetcar or an automobile.

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Description (continued)

The varying building designs in Motor Row are unified by their related use as automobile showrooms, related specialty buildings, and garages. All but one of the extant buildings in Motor Row from within the period of significance were originally associated with the early automobile. This specialized function, in turn, dictated the predominant and generally consistent design character shared by the buildings throughout the district.

Deep lots fronting on Michigan Avenue made it possible to create buildings with very large ground floor areas without obstructing columns. The automobile showrooms and other public functions predominantly fronted on Michigan Avenue; service entrances and facilities were located off side streets or along Wabash or Indiana avenues, which run parallel to Michigan Avenue on either side, and functioned as "service streets" for Motor Row.

The "streetwall" formed by the continuous masonry fronts of these showroom buildings forms an indelible urban image of Chicago at the beginning of the 20th century, when the automobile became a standard feature of American life. The survival of most of these buildings has resulted in a nearly continuous, three-block-long streetwall that distinguishes this area not only historically, but also visually. This mostly uninterrupted stretch of buildings south of Cermak Road gives this portion of South Michigan Avenue a strongly linear definition.

The boundaries of the district have been drawn to include those properties associated with the historic area that contribute to its historic visual character. The district is the largest extant collection of contiguous buildings that was once part of historic Motor Row. The boundaries reflect the original concentration of buildings dedicated to the automobile and reflect the distinct changes in visual and historic character of the area that have occurred through time, including the presence of non-contributing buildings, historic and more recent intrusions (McCormick Convention Center to the east, the Stevenson Expressway to the south, and the elevated rapid transit line to the west), and vacant/parking lots. Generally, vacant lots have been excluded except where they are part of a contiguous block face. The one exception is the west side of the 2300-block of South Michigan, which includes only one contributing building and was included because it lies in the middle of the district where both block faces to the north and south are included.

The buildings in the district represent the development of the automobile showroom and other types of buildings related to the early automobile and may be characterized as follows:

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Description (continued)

1909-1915

As with all new building types, the earliest examples are the simplest in elevation and in plan. Within the Motor Row district, the first showrooms date to 1909. These early examples were typically two- and three-stories tall, with simple facades framing wide expanses of plate glass windows and oftentimes with recessed entries. The Cadillac Motor Car Co. Showroom, 1909 (Building Catalog #12, hereafter only identified by catalog number), by the firm of Jenney, Mundie and & Jensen is one such-example. Ground floor showroom windows and smaller second-floor windows are simply framed with enameled terra cotta in a buff color. Ornamentation is confined to brackets and dentils between each story and a simple, slightly projecting cornice.

The Stevens-Duryea Co./F.I.A.T. Auto Co. Showroom (#19), 1910, by the firm of Holabird & Roche is a two-story building situated on a wider lot with 67 feet of frontage, all of which is devoted to plate glass window display. This expanse of glass with its narrow mullions gives the appearance of a strikingly stripped-down modern building. The originally continuous expanse of windows along the front of the building has been recently infilled, but the change is reversible.

The Cadillac Motor Car Co. Showroom (No.2), 1911, also by Holabird & Roche (#30), is a transitional design bridging the early showrooms with the increasing size and complexity of the next phase of larger and taller buildings, typically constructed on corner lots. Although five stories tall, the exterior ornamentation is simple in the Chicago School style, confined to recessed concrete panels within the frieze. The Michigan Avenue elevation has a recessed entry flanked by showroom windows, while the 23rd Street elevation has more showroom windows at the corner and service bays further east on the elevation. Another transitional showroom is the Thomas Flyer Garage and Service Building, 1910, again by the firm of Holabird & Roche (#31). Originally a three-story Chicago School building, two floors were added in 1915 by the firm of Alfred Alschuler.

The Alfred Cowles Showroom (#29), 1915, also by Holabird & Roche, is a three-story brick and terra-cotta mid-block showroom building with a continuous broad expanse of windows stretching from corner pier to pier and a distinctive stepped-gable parapet and exceptional brickwork. The adjacent three-story Saxon Automobile Co. Showroom (#28), 1915, by the same firm, while a smaller building, has a similar organization of the façade, but this time clad in a multi-colored terra cotta with an abstract geometric pattern.

These buildings have brick and terra-cotta exteriors, typically rendered in the Chicago School style or other commercial style from the period, and often with Sullivanesque, Prairie, geometric or classically-derived ornamentation. In addition to large ground-floor display windows, most buildings had transoms, recessed front entries, and service entries at the rear, or along the side elevations in the case of corner

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Description (continued)

buildings. Pronounced piers and spandrels in the Chicago School style typically divide multi-bay façades, most often with stringcourses dividing the ground floor from the upper floors. Single-bay facades are often treated as geometric framing devices, with the masonry corner piers and cornice forming a continuous masonry frame contrasting with the continuous banks of windows spanning between. Roof forms are generally flat, although a few of the buildings have false-mansard fronts, stepped, raked or gabled parapets.

The typical interior organization of these early showroom buildings featured expansive open floor spaces topped by utilitarian factory areas that were used for "everything from charging batteries to the final assembly of new cars." The automobile was an outdoor vehicle and required high expansive interior spaces to display it best. Low or cramped rooms would not be adequate. Offices and a cashier might be located to the rear of the showroom spaces, as well as open garage areas and an elevator connecting with the upper floors.

In addition to the auto showrooms from the period, the three-story, Sullivan-esque terra cotta-clad Kelly-Springfield Tire Co. showroom (#32), 1915, designed by architect Alfred Alschuler, and the five-story Packard Motor Company Warehouse (#45) on Indiana Street, 1915, designed by the firm of Mundie & Jensen, illustrate how the design conventions of the early auto showroom were similarly applied to other types of auto-related buildings in the district. The Chicago Telephone Co. office building (#49), 1915, by the firm of Holabird and Roche and also on Wabash Street, is the only contributing building thought not to have been originally for an automobile-related use.

1916-1936

As showroom design evolved, the buildings became larger with more varied functional spaces and more elaborate exterior ornamentation. During the 1910s and 1920s in American architecture, revivalist styles were prevalent, and designers of automobile showrooms often came under this influence. Renaissance Revival details are seen on the one-story Schillo Motor Sales Co. Showroom, 1917 (#27), by Mundie & Jensen. A round-arch pediment tops the recessed entry and Corinthian pilasters frame the showroom windows and swags and shields embellish the frieze level. All these details were executed in buff-colored terra cotta, now the preferred exterior surface material of showroom designers. Two-story, fluted pilasters mark off the showroom bays on both corner elevations of the Locomobile-Auburn Auto Showroom, 1925 (#18), by architect Melvin Nelson.

The adjacent mid-block showrooms built in 1922 by the Hudson Motor Co. (#4) and the Marmon Car Co. (#9) were set on much wider lots. Designed by Alfred Alschuler, both feature ornamental terra cotta details, along with elements of the Spanish Revival, such as red tile roofs, a style that was commonly used by designers of auto showrooms—and movie palaces—during the 1920s. The central bay on the

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Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Description (continued)

Hudson building's three-story facade has a Palladian-style window in the projecting central bay with small "H" (for Hudson) medallions and an arched center entry. Twisted columns and rope moldings outline showroom windows, and the second-floor has smaller banks of windows while the third-floor has punched arched-top windows. The two-story Marmon building continues many of these same elements.

The Sullivan-esque style was popular in the Midwest for commercial buildings (particularly in Chicago) generally after World War I. Showrooms in this style have a clear relationship between vertical and horizontal structural elements, simplified door and window frames, cornices and wall surfaces. Ornamentation is simplified to geometric and plant motifs, and these buildings typically have a large central ornamental cartouche at the parapet. Christian Eckstorm designed two such examples in the district, including the two-story Roamer Automobile Co. Showroom, 1916 (#6),

In terms of overall organization and stylistic treatment, these buildings continued the same general characteristics as the earlier showrooms, but the showroom buildings from this period were often larger with more elaborate decorative treatments. Along with the more elaborate elevations, the showroom interiors housed many more functions and activities. A cross-section of a typical multi-story building appeared in the August 1919 issue of Motor Age. It showed such upper-story features as an overhead track, paint drying kilns, stock room, upholstery shop, and sheet metal department. And, as in the case of the Hudson and Marmon buildings, the elaborate exterior ornamentation was carried into the showrooms themselves to form dramatic outdoor stage-set "vignettes" against which to showcase the automobile.

The six-story reinforced-concrete Cadillac Motor Car Service Building (#40), 1919, by architect Albert Kahn, illustrates how the typical stylistic conventions of the district were applied to more utilitarian garage buildings such as this, which fronted on Indiana Avenue. The last building to be constructed within the district's period of significance in 1936 was the Illinois Automobile Club at 2400 S. Michigan (#16), designed by architect Phillip Maher. It is a Moderne-style adaptation of the Spanish Mission style, featuring a three-story clock tower.

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Cook County, ILMotor Row: Building Catalog

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Architect</u>
1.	Golden Pond Restaurant 2200 S. Michigan Ave. (Non-contributing building)	c. 1970	Unknown
2.	Bird-Sykes Co. Building (No. 1) 2208-2216 S. Michigan Ave.	1910	Christian Eckstorm
3.	Colonial Trust & Savings Bank 2218 S. Michigan Ave. (Non-contributing building)	1919	J.T. Fortin
4.	Hudson Motor Co. Showroom 2222 S. Michigan Ave.	1922	Alfred Alschuler
5.	Marmon Co. Showroom 2232 S. Michigan Ave.	1922	Alfred Alschuler
6.	Roamer Automobile Co. Showroom 2240 S. Michigan Ave.	1916	Christian Eckstorm
7.	Building for Seipp Realty Trust 2244 S. Michigan Ave.	1917	H.C. Hodgkins
8.	Centaur Motor Co. Showroom 2248 S. Michigan Ave.	1912	E.J. Orenstein
9.	Burger King 2328 S. Michigan Ave. (Non-contributing building)	c. 1990	Unknown
10.	Mitchell Automobile Co. Showroom 2334-38 S. Michigan Ave.	1910	Jarvis Hunt

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Architect</u>
11.	Illinois Automobile Club Showroom 2400-10 S. Michigan Ave.	1936	Phillip Maher
12.	Cadillac Motor Car Co. Showroom (No. 1) 2412 S. Michigan Ave.	1909	Jenney, Mundie & Jensen
13.	Detroit Electric Automobile Co. Showroom 2416 S. Michigan Ave.	1909, 1970	Jenney, Mundie & Jensen
14.	Pierce Arrow Auto Co. Showroom 2420 S. Michigan Ave.	1909	Jenney, Mundie & Jensen
15.	Building for P.H. Otis 2419 S. Michigan Ave. (Non-contributing building)	1915 1970	Christian Eckstorm
16.	L&H Buick Sales Co. Showroom 2415 S. Michigan Ave.	1916	Christian Eckstorm
17.	Speedwell Motor Co. Showroom 2411 S. Michigan Ave.	1909	C.E. & R.W. Beach
18.	Locomobile-Auburn Auto Showroom 2401-09 S. Michigan Ave.	1925	Melvin A. Nelson
19.	Stevens-Duryea Co./ F.I.A.T. Auto Co. Showroom 2347-51 S. Michigan Ave.	1910	Holabird & Roche
20.	Cunningham Car Co. Building 2341 S. Michigan Ave.	1910	F.E. Davidson
21.	Federal Motor Car Co. Showroom 2337 S. Michigan Ave.	1910	David Robertson

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Cook County, IL

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Architect</u>
22.	Unknown 2335 S. Michigan Ave.	c. 1910	Unknown
23.	Building for James Walsh 2333 S. Michigan Ave.	1916	Christian Eckstorm
24.	Premier Auto Car Co. Showroom 2329 S. Michigan Ave.	1909	Holabird & Roche
25.	Building for Gerabed Pushman 2325 S. Michigan Ave.	1912	Christian Eckstorm
26.	Elgin Motor Car Co. Showroom 2323 S. Michigan Ave.	1920	L. M. Mitchell
27.	Schillo Motor Sales Co. Showroom 2317 S. Michigan Ave.	1917	Mundie & Jensen
28.	Saxon Automobile Co. Showroom 2313 S. Michigan Ave.	1915	Holabird & Roche
29.	Alfred Cowles Showroom 2311 S. Michigan Ave.	1915	Holabird & Roche
30.	Cadillac Motor Car Co. Building (No. 2) 2301 S. Michigan Ave.	1911	Holabird & Roche
31.	Thomas Flyer Garage and Service Building 2255 S. Michigan Ave.	1910 1915	Holabird & Roche Alfred Alschuler
32.	Kelly-Springfield Tire Co. Showroom 2251-53 S. Michigan Ave.	1915	Alfred Alschuler
33.	Moline Automobile Co. Showroom 2245 S. Michigan Ave.	1917	Howard G. Hodgkins

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
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<u>Number</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Architect</u>
34.	F.I.A.T. Automobile Co. Showroom 2239 S. Michigan Ave.	1910	C.W. & G.L. Rapp
35.	Cole Motor Co. Building 2235 S. Michigan Ave.	1923	William Whitney
36.	Triangle Motors, Inc. Showroom 2229 S. Michigan Ave.	1919	L.G. Hallberg
37.	Bird-Sykes Co. Building (No. 3) 2221 S. Michigan Ave. (non-contributing building)	1919	Harold Holmes
38.	Bird-Sykes Co. Building (No. 2) 2215 S. Michigan Ave. (non-contributing building)	1915	Christian Eckstorm
39.	Rambler Automobile Co. Showroom 2246-58 S. Indiana Ave.	1911	Jenney, Mundie & Jensen
40.	Cadillac Motor Car Service Building 2300-08 S. Indiana Ave.	1919	Albert Kahn
41.	Unknown 2312 S. Indiana Ave.	1913	W. J. Summerbelle (contractor)
42.	J & J Exhibitors (No. 1) 2314-24 S. Indiana Ave. (Non-contributing structure)	c. 1970	Unknown
43.	Cole Automobile Co. Showroom 2326-28 S. Indiana Ave.	1915	Z.T. and C.G. Davis
44.	J & J Exhibitors (No. 2) 2334 S. Indiana Ave. (Non-contributing structure)	c. 1970	Unknown

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Cook County, IL

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Architect</u>
45.	Packard Motor Co. Warehouse Bldg. 2338-42 S. Indiana Ave.	1915	Mundie & Jensen
46.	Oneida Truck Co. Showroom and Service Station 60 E. 23 rd St./2247 S. Wabash Ave.	1919	Christian Eckstorm
47.	Oneida Truck Co. Showroom and Service Station 2247-51 S. Wabash Ave./60 E. 23 rd St.	1919	Christian Eckstorm
48.	Randolph Motor Car Co. Showroom 2241-45 S. Wabash Ave.	1910	Unknown
49.	Chicago Telephone Co. Calumet Office Building 2211-15 S. Wabash Ave.	1915	Holabird and Roche
50.	Chef Luciano's Gourmet Chicken 43-51 S. Cermak Rd./2209 S. Wabash (Non-contributing structure)	c. 1970	Unknown
51.	Building for Harold A. Howard 2234 S. Wabash Ave.	1919	W.L. Settings

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Statement of Significance

Chicago's Motor Row is locally significant as a district under Criterion A (commerce) and C (architecture) for its association with the historic contexts described in the National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form for Motor Row in Chicago, IL. These include "Early Automobile Dealerships and the Development of Chicago's Motor Row (1905-36)", "Early Automobile and Auto-Related Showrooms: Emergence of a Building Type (1905-36)", and "Motor Row and Chicago Architects (1905-36)."

Early Automobile Dealerships and the Development of Chicago's Motor Row (1905-36)

Following the Fire of 1871, Michigan Avenue developed into an exclusive residential district with mansions, rowhouses, and churches. The character of South Michigan Avenue, however, began to change rapidly at the turn of the century, when many residents began to relocate to areas further from the noise and dirt of the city. Michigan Avenue's reputation as "the longest and best automobile course in any city of this country" became music to the ears of the city's first auto dealers, who began using it as a route to test-drive automobiles. At first they were sold from dealers specializing in bicycles and horse-drawn carriages; but as soon as the automobile showroom emerged as an entity in its own right, Motor Row developed on South Michigan Avenue and became this remarkable and historically significant concentration of early automobile showrooms and other buildings related to the sale, service, repair and storage of the early automobile.

Chicago's Motor Row meets the registration requirements for the Motor Row district. Automobile rows had developed in numerous cities shortly after the turn of the last century as automobile companies sought to create districts where the sale and repair of cars could become an easy urban shopping experience. Despite the passage of nearly a century, no other commercial strip in the city, or the United States, comes close to duplicating either the importance or character of the Motor Row District on South Michigan Avenue. It is considered to be the largest intact, early motor colony in the United States. The district, centered on a three-block stretch of Michigan Avenue, has 51 buildings forming nearly continuous street frontage of showrooms and other related buildings that retain their significant architectural fabric.

Motor Row and Chicago Architects (1905-36)

Christian Albert Eckstorm (1863-1927), who designed nine buildings in the district between 1910 and 1919, heavily influenced the early architectural character of Motor Row. As the sales and servicing of cars became more specialized during the second decade of the 20th century, the developers of Motor Row began to employ high-profile commercial architecture firms. The well-known architectural firm of Holabird & Roche helped to transform the appearance of the auto showroom and service buildings in Motor Row

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Statement of Significance (continued)

with more than half a dozen high quality designs between 1909 and 1915. Another influential architect on Motor Row was Alfred Alschuler (1876-1940). Three of his buildings remain in the district (#4, #5 and #32) and are textbook illustrations of the type of upscale automobile "sales palaces" from the final era of Motor Row's development. Motor Row also includes a building designed by Albert Kahn (1869-1942), who is acknowledged to be one of the nation's most influential industrial architects of the early 20th century. The Cadillac Warehouse Building, 1919 (#40) is the only remaining intact industrial building designed by Kahn in Chicago.

Criterion A: Commerce

The buildings in Motor Row comprise the largest collection of intact early automobile showrooms in the United States. The survival of such a large grouping of adjacent auto-related buildings is unique in this country. As a grouping, the buildings in the Motor Row District strongly express their historic origins and associations.

The range of buildings in Motor Row illustrates the evolution of the automobile showroom, and other related product and service buildings, from their beginnings at the start of the 20th century through the 1930s. The buildings highlight the dramatic changes in automobile-related building types, from simple two-story structures used for display and offices, to multi-story buildings housing a variety of departments for the repair, storage, painting, and finishing of automobiles. They were mostly constructed by speculators for use by auto dealers, automotive parts companies and related businesses.

The buildings remain generally intact, particularly at the upper levels. However, many of the windows have been back-painted or filled in with brick or aluminum, and many of the ground levels have been altered over time. These alternations are almost entirely reversible and the district continues to have sufficient integrity to convey its associations to the history and development of the sale and servicing of the early automobile in Chicago.

Criterion C: Architecture

The varying building designs in Motor Row are unified by their overriding use as automobile showrooms and garages. This specialized function, in turn, dictated the predominant design features that distinguish these buildings from other commercial buildings of the period: a very large proportion of glass-to-masonry, particularly on the lower levels where the automobile display rooms were located. The district also includes the work of many significant Chicago architects (see list below), here in an influential role of helping develop and further refine a new property type: the automobile showroom building.

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Statement of Significance (continued)

The district is comprised of 51 buildings (44 contributing and 7 non contributing buildings) that demonstrate the design evolution of early showrooms from 2-3 story, utilitarian buildings through increasingly complex interior spaces behind revivalist facades, as well as other buildings related to the service and storage of the automobile. The original masonry exteriors of most of the individual buildings, including their original decorative details, are largely intact. However, as is often the case with commercial buildings, the ground floor levels of the facades have been altered and many upper-story windows have been covered over. The principal changes have been to their window openings, many of which have been back-painted or filled in with brick or aluminum. Although these changes affect the facades, they do not alter the basic showroom building shape and mass nor its architectural relationship between the masonry and the window openings. These alterations are largely cosmetic in nature, and the original facades are either still underneath the later additions or can be readily replicated. The district continues to have sufficient integrity to convey its associations to the history and development of the sale and servicing of the early automobile in Chicago.

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Statement of Significance (continued)

Architect/Builder

Christian Eckstorm
Holabird & Roche
Alfred Alschuler
Ernest Walker
Jenney, Mundie & Jensen
Albert Kahn
E.J. Orenstein
H.C. Hodgkins
Jarvis Hunt
Phillip Maher
C.E. & R.W. Beach
Melvin A. Nelson
F.E. Davidson
David Robertson
L.M. Mitchell
Howard G. Hodgkins
C.W. & G.L. Rapp
William Whitney
L.G. Hallberg
Harold Holmes
Z.T. and C.G. Davis
W.L.. Stebbings

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Continuation Sheet**

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

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MOTOR ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Motor Row Historic District
Cook County, IL

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

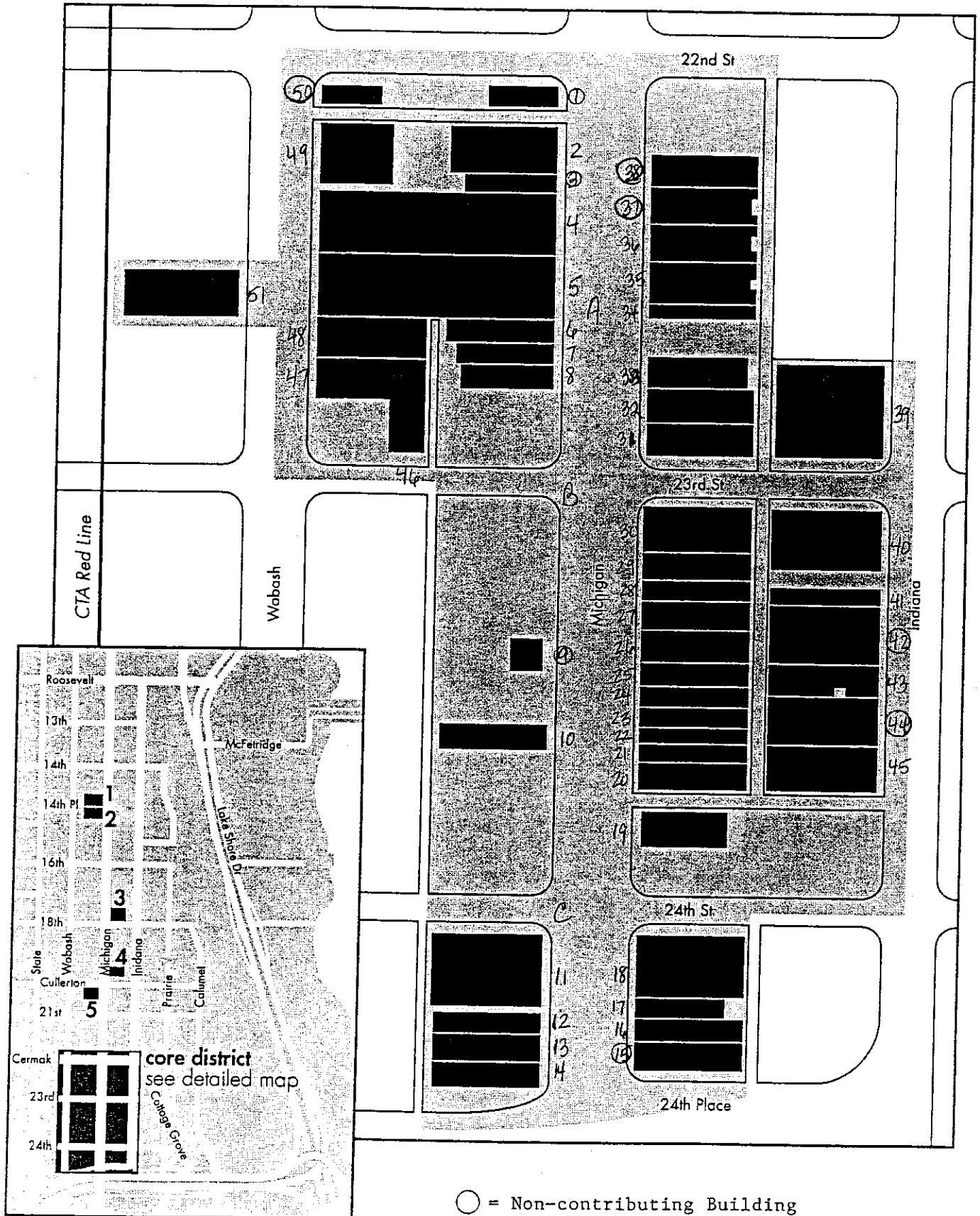
The 2200-, 2300- and 2400-blocks of South Michigan Avenue between Cermak Road and the Stevenson Expressway, as well as adjacent portions of Wabash and Indiana avenues. Roughly portions of Blocks 5, 7, 8, 9, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 30, 31, 34, 35, 44, 45, 48, 49 in Canal Trustees Subdivision of the west half of Section 27, Range 39 North, Township 14 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Cook County, Illinois. Please refer to the site map, Appendix II.

Boundary Justification

The Motor Row district contains commercial buildings historically associated with the historic area that contributes to its historic visual character. The boundaries were defined by considering integrity, setting, and use as defined in National Register Bulletin 21, Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties.

The district is the largest extant collection of contiguous buildings that was once part of historic Motor Row. The boundaries reflect the historic concentration of buildings dedicated to the automobile and reflect the distinct changes in visual and historic character of the area that have occurred through time, including the presence of non-contributing buildings, historic and more recent intrusions (McCormick Convention Center to the east, the Stevenson Expressway to the south, and the elevated rapid transit line to the west), and vacant/parking lots. Generally, vacant lots have been excluded except where they are part of a contiguous block face. The one exception is the west side of the 2300-block of South Michigan, which includes only one contributing building and was included because it lies in the middle of the district where both block faces to the north and south are included.

Motor Row District



CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, Point Sal Ataje, Address Restricted, Point Sal Highlands vicinity, 02001392, LISTED, 11/21/02

GEORGIA, JENKINS COUNTY, Millen High School, 100 Cleveland Ave., Millen, 02000842, LISTED, 11/21/02

GEORGIA, PUTNAM COUNTY, Rockville Academy and St. Paul Methodist Church Historic District, E of Eatonton and S of GA 16, Rockville Rd., Eatonton vicinity, 02001382, LISTED, 11/19/02

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Automatic Electric Company Building, 1001 W. Van Buren, Chicago, 02001386, LISTED, 11/20/02

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Berwyn Health Center, 6600 W. 26th St., Berwyn, 02001352, LISTED, 11/21/02

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Fuller Park, 331 W. 45th St., Chicago, 02001347, LISTED, 11/20/02 (Chicago Park District MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Maxwell--Briscoe Automobile Company Showroom, 1737 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 02001349, LISTED, 11/19/02 (Motor Row, Chicago, Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Motor Row Historic District, Roughly bounded by 22nd St., Indiana St., 24th Place, and Wabash St., Chicago, 02001387, LISTED, 11/18/02 (Motor Row, Chicago, Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Norwood Park Historical District, roughly bounded by Harlem Ave., Nagle Ave., Bryn Mawr Ave., and Avondale St., Chicago, 02001350, LISTED, 11/21/02

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Scoville Place, Jct. of Lake St. and Oak Park Ave., Oak Park, 02001351, LISTED, 11/21/02

ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Waukegan Building, 4 S. Genesee St., Waukegan, 02001355, LISTED, 11/21/02

ILLINOIS, MADISON COUNTY, Collins, Daniel Dove, House, 621 W. Main St., Collinsville, 02001385, LISTED, 11/21/02

ILLINOIS, MADISON COUNTY, Norodni Sin, 209-211 E. Vandalia, Edwardsville, 02001353, LISTED, 11/21/02

ILLINOIS, OGLE COUNTY, Buffalo Grove Lime Kiln, Galena Trail Rd., Polo, 02001348, LISTED, 11/20/02

ILLINOIS, WILLIAMSON COUNTY, Stotlar, Ed. M., House, 1304 W. Main St., Marion, 02001354, LISTED, 11/21/02

IOWA, HARRISON COUNTY, Woodbine Normal and Grade School, 5th and Weare, Woodbine, 02001227, LISTED, 11/18/02 (Public Schools for Iowa: Growth and Change MPS)

MISSISSIPPI, GREENE COUNTY, Vernal Presbyterian Church, 455 McInnis--Vernal Rd., Lucedale vicinity, 02001389, LISTED, 11/18/02

MISSISSIPPI, HINDS COUNTY, Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center, 181 S Jefferson St, Jackson, 02000209, LISTED, 11/19/02

MISSISSIPPI, HINDS COUNTY, Welty, Eudora, House, 1119 Pinehurst St., Jackson, 02001388, LISTED, 11/21/02

MISSISSIPPI, UNION COUNTY, New Albany Downtown Historic District, Roughly bounded by W. and E. Main, Camp St., and former St. Louis and San Francisco RR tracks, New Albany, 96001266, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 11/06/02

MISSOURI, COLE COUNTY, Kaulien Mercantile Company, 900 and 902 E. High St., Jefferson City, 02001402, LISTED, 11/21/02

MISSOURI, JACKSON COUNTY, Kansas City Club Building, 1228 Baltimore Ave., Kansas City, 02001401, LISTED, 11/19/02

MISSOURI, JACKSON COUNTY, TNA Corporate Headquarters' Building, 1735-1741 Baltimore Ave.--1740 Main St., Kansas City, 02001403, LISTED, 11/20/02

MISSOURI, JACKSON COUNTY, West Ninth Street--Baltimore Avenue Historic District (Boundary Increase I), West 100 blk. of 10th St. and 1000 blk. of Baltimore Ave., Kansas City, 01001413, LISTED, 11/20/02

MISSOURI, MARION COUNTY, Maple Avenue Historic District, Roughly bounded by Broadway and Center St., Alley to North St., Dulany to Section, Hannibal, 02001404, LISTED, 11/21/02

MONTANA, LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY, Lewis and Clark County Hospital Historic District, 3404 Cooney Dr., Helena, 02001101, LISTED, 11/19/02

NEW YORK, DELAWARE COUNTY, Congregation Bnai Israel Synagogue, Wagner Ave., Fleischmanns, 02001396, LISTED, 11/21/02

NEW YORK, ERIE COUNTY, Hellenic Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, 1000 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, 02001329, LISTED, 11/13/02

NEW YORK, LIVINGSTON COUNTY, Williamsburg Cemetery, Abel Rd., Hampton Corners, 02001328, LISTED, 11/14/02

NEW YORK, QUEENS COUNTY, Congregation Tifereth Israel, 109-18 and 109-20 54th Ave., Corona, 02001357, LISTED, 11/21/02

NEW YORK, RENSSELAER COUNTY, Lansingburgh Village Burial Ground, Third Ave. and 107th St., Troy, 02001358, LISTED, 11/21/02

NEW YORK, RICHMOND COUNTY, Calvary Presbyterian Church, 909 Castleton Ave., Staten Island, 02001356, LISTED, 11/21/02

NEW YORK, SULLIVAN COUNTY, St. John's Episcopal Church and Rectory, 15 St. John's St., Monticello, 02001359, LISTED, 11/21/02

NEW YORK, ULSTER COUNTY, K. WHITTELSEY (Tugboat), 3 North St. at Rondout Creek, Kingston, 02001395, LISTED, 11/21/02

NEW YORK, ULSTER COUNTY, Ulster House Hotel, Main St. at Academy Rd., Pine Hill, 02001399, LISTED, 11/21/02

OHIO, CUYAHOGA COUNTY, Weizer Building, 11801 Buckeye Rd., Cleveland, 02001360, LISTED, 11/21/02

TENNESSEE, MADISON COUNTY, New Southern Hotel, 112-120 E. Baltimore St., Jackson, 02001378, LISTED, 11/21/02

TENNESSEE, SHELBY COUNTY, Martin Memorial Temple CME Church, 65 S. Parkway West, Memphis, 02001379, LISTED, 11/20/02

TENNESSEE, WARREN COUNTY, City Cemetery, South High St., McMinnville, 02001377, LISTED, 11/21/02

UTAH, SAN JUAN COUNTY, St. Christopher's Episcopal Mission, UT 163, Bluff vicinity, 02001042, LISTED, 11/18/02

VERMONT, ADDISON COUNTY, Brooksville Advent Church, 1338 Dog Team Tavern Rd., New Haven, 02001380, LISTED, 11/21/02 (Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures in Vermont MPS)

VERMONT, ADDISON COUNTY, Dog Team Tavern, 1338 Dog Team Tavern Rd., New Haven, 02001381, LISTED, 11/21/02

VERMONT, WINDSOR COUNTY, Saddlebow Farm, 2477 Gold Coast Rd., Bridgewater, 02001345, LISTED, 11/14/02

VIRGINIA, AUGUSTA COUNTY, Bare House and Mill, 157 Wilda Rd., Stuarts Draft vicinity, 02001364, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, CARROLL COUNTY, Carter Hydraulic Rams, Off Grayson St. and US 221, Hillsville, 02001373, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, FRANKLIN COUNTY, Bleak Hill, Address Restricted, Callaway vicinity, 02001374, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, GREENE COUNTY, Powell--McMullan House, 233 McMullen Mill Rd., Stanardsville vicinity, 02001367, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, HANOVER COUNTY, Hanover Wayside, 8225 Hanover Wayside Rd., Hanover, 02001365, LISTED, 11/22/02

VIRGINIA, HENRY COUNTY, Old Turner Place, 7643 Henry Rd., Henry, 02001371, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, LYNCHBURG INDEPENDENT CITY, Court House Hill--Downtown Historic District (Boundary Increase), Roughly along Madison St., Harrison St., 7th St., 6th St., Lynchburg, 02001361, LISTED, 11/22/02

VIRGINIA, PAGE COUNTY, Wall Brook Farm, 967 Longs Rd., Luray vicinity, 02001375, LISTED, 11/22/02

VIRGINIA, RICHMOND INDEPENDENT CITY, Bryan, Joseph, Park, 4308 Hermitage Rd., Richmond, 02001369, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, RICHMOND INDEPENDENT CITY, Church of the Sacred Heart, 1401 Perry St., Richmond, 02001368, LISTED, 11/22/02

VIRGINIA, RICHMOND INDEPENDENT CITY, New Pump House, 1708 Pump House Dr., Richmond, 02001366, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, Hamilton Schoolhouse, VA 611, S. Buffalo Rd., Lexington vicinity, 02001372, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, TAZEWELL COUNTY, Sanders, Walter McDonald, House, College Ave., Bluefield, 02001370, LISTED, 11/21/02

VIRGINIA, WISE COUNTY, Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park, 10 W. Street N, Big Stone Gap, 02001362, LISTED, 11/22/02

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